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BACTERIOLOGICAL WARFARE PROPAGANDA IN KOREA

The propaganda campaign alleging that United Nations forces are using bacteriological warfare in Korea has reached an unprecedented volume, and has been well coordinated throughout the Communist Orbit. These allegations are not a new facet of Communist propaganda. Similar charges have been made periodically since the outbreak of the hostilities, and a spate of such charges reached campaign proportions in May 1951. Since then, however, the accusations had died down.

On 23 February, the North Korean Foreign Minister alleged that UN forces were using bacteriological warfare. The charge was reiterated by the Chinese Premier, Chou En Lai, and subsequently in a chorus by all Orbit propaganda media.

Various Soviet bloc countries have sent protests to the United Nations and to the International Red Cross. The World Federation of Trade Unions and the Partisans of Peace also have forwarded protests to the United Nations. An "international commission of democratic jurists" has arrived in Korea to examine the "crimes" committed by the UN forces.

American planes allegedly dropped various insects carrying germs of such diseases as bubonic plague and cholera on many provinces of North Korea. On 6 March, Peiping stated that US planes had extended germ warfare by sending a total of 448 aircraft in 68 raids over Manchuria between 29 February and 5 March. The broadcast added that at least one area had been bombed and strafed by American fliers.

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Positive countermeasures to be taken against the outbreak of epidemics have been outlined. These include inoculations, the setting up of quarantine stations at traffic points, and the warning to units in designated areas where "the enemy had dropped bacteria" to maintain a closer

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guard, to be careful of uncooked food or unboiled water, to make lids for all wells, and to disinfect enemy leaflets. Battalion commanders also were warned that they would be held responsible for any disobedience of these regulations.

Nowhere has there been mention of actual illness or of epidemics in North Korea, but merely talk of the presence of bacteria and the dangers of diseases spread by them. A Chinese Communist news dispatch said that epidemics of "such contagious diseases as measles, smallpox, influenza, pneumonia, and relapsing fever" had broken out in "some areas" in north and east central China.

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The United States has been singled out as the arch perpetrator of these "crimes." Hence, the hate-America theme has been prominent in all output. The most common theme, aside from the routine charges of American bestiality, is the warning that Americans are preparing BW attacks on other areas of the world. The desire to experiment in this field was offered as a reason why "American ruling circles are not eager for cessation of the Korean war."

The London Daily Worker correspondent in Korea accused the US 3rd Division of placing bacteria-laden insects in artillery shells which were fired "dangerously close" to the British Commonwealth Division, while a Paris Ce Soir correspondent stated that not only may inaccurate UN pilots drop these germs over their own troops but that 4000-odd UN prisoners will have to take their chances along with the rest of the Korean population.

Since reports from the Far East indicate that there is no health situation sufficiently bad at present to cause a campaign of this magnitude, it seems likely that the campaign is designed to scare the Communist forces and the North Korean population into taking proper precautions to prevent the epidemics which usually occur in Korea during the spring season.

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This propaganda could also serve to lay the groundwork for a break-off of the armistice negotiations, to embarrass the United States, or to drive a wedge between the United States and the other UN powers.

Although the USSR and the Chinese Communists have the capability of initiating bacteriological warfare, in the absence of other evidence, a propaganda campaign of this type cannot be looked upon as an indication that they are about to implement this capability. Nor is it likely that the present propaganda campaign is designed to cover Communist bacteriological warfare experiments or to set the stage for UN investigators.

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